

## Dignified work needs leaders

In this addition of the Newsletter, the MCW presents a summary of its report 'Reclaiming Time'. This document plays a key role in the international campaign involving the World Movement of Christian Workers, the international Trades Unions and the International Labour Office of the United Nations.

A decent and dignified work is seen by many as playing a key role in the eradication of poverty which continues to condemn, nearly half of the world's 2.8 billion workers and their families to live on an income of less than \$2US per day which is the UN poverty line figure.

Dignified or decent Work is about Full Employment, it's about Respect for Workers Rights, it's about Social Protection including decent pensions for old age, and it's about Equality between women and men, and it is about access to good quality public services.

The Movement of Christian Workers is calling for Decent Work to be at the Heart of social and economic policy so that it may become the cornerstone for a just, democratic and participatory society. It's about Social Justice.

The report in this newsletter of the Community and Leadership Conference echo's the importance of training and forming of leaders for this essential task of engaging in the world to bring about change. The participants underlined the importance of coming together with like minded people with shared values of solidarity and encouragement.

In a world dominated by the globalisation of the economy there is an ever increasing need to call and train leaders to ensure there is a 'grass roots' or 'bottom up' approach to creating solutions to poverty and injustice. Without this essential training offered by movements such as MCW, then we risk a 'top down approach' which all too often can lead to a reinforcement

of the status quo.

The National Day Conference will give us an opportunity to reflect on these issues starting out from the Report on Reclaiming Time. As David McLoughlin said at the Lay Leadership Conference, "The leadership we have before us is rooted and seen as part of the reality of all people, there is holiness in the ordinary; it calls us to engage in that reality."

**National Day  
Conference  
Incorporating the Annual  
General Meeting**

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November  
2006**

**11am to 3.30pm  
at**

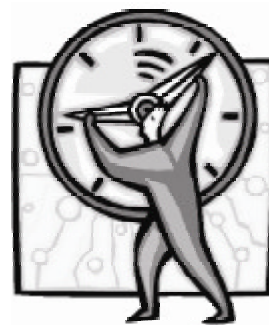
**St Bede's Pastoral Centre,  
21 Blossom Street, York**

**Reclaiming Time'  
Report**

**Impact and Future Plans**

**Refreshments and a light  
buffet lunch will be provided**

# Reclaiming Time Report



The MCW is calling for a campaign to reclaim control over our time and is set against the backdrop of socio-economic, political and policy changes over recent decades, which have sought to advance ‘flexibility’ as a necessity for a dynamic and free market as well as a creator of jobs. However the cost of ‘flexibility’ in the labour market is that more and more of us have to work “all the hours God sends”.

The MCW has identified workers’ experiencing long and intense hours of work within their employment. Within this intensification of work comes the need for services to be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The UK is noted for its greater variety of work-time arrangements in comparison with most other EU countries.

The consequence is that work-life and home-life encroach on each other’s territory making greater demands and creating more anxiety and stress as we seek to accommodate them both equally. Our ‘flexible’ jobs and roles are uncompromising and unyielding. In order to cope we sacrifice our friends, leisure, interests and activities. Paradoxically, these are the very activities that would release us from our stress and promote our well-being and mental health.

The MCW report confirms various research findings that:

- Employers can ‘fudge’ the actual amount of hours which employees work which therefore undermines the national minimum wage level.
- There is an expectation to work unpaid hours or to work Sundays. To reject these conditions can mean working in an atmosphere of greater job insecurity or no job at all.
- Demands to stay after hours without warning can mean workers face real dilemmas. This can cause ill feeling or even animosity between colleagues whilst such requests for parents and particularly women with childcare responsibilities creates real anxiety.
- Employers attempt to lower their fixed costs by employing the minimum of

staff.

- It is the least powerful and most vulnerable workers who have the minimum control over their hours of work.
- Suggests legal breaks are not being taken by workers:
  - Tea Breaks – A National Opinion Poll survey says 68% of Britain’s 28 million workers never take all their daily breaks.
  - Lunch / Dinner breaks – Research studies say average lunch breaks are now only 27 minutes long.
  - Public Holidays - On Monday 28<sup>th</sup> August 2005 a high street bank broke with a 130 year old tradition by opening branches on a Bank Holiday.
  - Many service sector employees work on Bank Holidays but a survey also found that 2/3rds of professional and managerial workers had gone to work on a Bank Holiday.

For many, the opportunity for sharing of ideas, developing analysis and critical thinking which would help to understand our situation about what is going on around us is itself destroyed by lack of time. It is lack of time to take stock that prevents us from finding solutions to our time problems.

The Judaeo-Christian tradition acts as a challenge and a call to be engaged in the here and now. Looking back is part and parcel of informing our understanding and knowledge. Thus it is the past as well as the present and our experiences locally as well as globally that prompts the MCW to promote and encourage initiatives and to campaign to take back control over time for ourselves and others. In the process we may create an environment of decent work and a balanced lifestyle for all. Therefore the MCW calls on its members and people of good will to:

- Take regulation breaks to which we are legally entitled.
- Work for the recognition and adherence to the TUC's 'Work Your Hours' Day to help promote a positive attitude to this situation.
- Raise awareness about the hours we work in Britain and encourage workers to control their time more consciously.
- Support campaigns to regulate the working week in the UK through firm adherence to the European Working Time Directive.
- Support measures to encourage job sharing and wider economic participation by the long-term unemployed.
- Seek Government legislation to support policy initiatives around a more 'family friendly' work-life balance because

current entitlement does not mean all workers in practice have access to them.

- Understand more fully the global context in which we live.
- Promote and develop practical expressions of international solidarity particularly around issues relating to time.
- Promote and contribute to the WMCW's programme 'Decent Work in a New Society'.

We believe that as a Movement of Christian Workers, the stories of life we tell in our groups and especially as we gather around the Eucharistic table are always potentially subversive and transformative events in time and history. They help us to see our times with new eyes and enable us to engage our world with a clearer vision.

# International Day for Poverty Eradication 2006

There is a growing feeling worldwide that the rich are becoming richer and the poor are getting poorer.

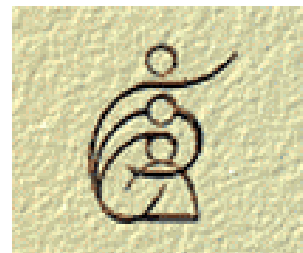
According to ILO Director-General Juan Somavia "Nearly half of the world's workers are unable to earn enough to lift themselves and their family members above the US\$2 a day poverty line. This is roughly the same total as in 1994"

Yet poverty is not only an issue in Developing Countries, according to the ILO the poverty rate in Ireland, Japan and the United States is 15 per cent.

The Global Call for Action Against Poverty called for a month of Action from 16<sup>th</sup> September to 17 October 2006 culminating in the largest Globalized mobilization against poverty on the 17<sup>th</sup> October.

In just one day 23 and half million people in more than 100 countries around the world have set a new Guinness World Record for the largest number of people to "STAND UP AGAINST POVERTY".

The World Record number was announced (17 October), on the international day for poverty eradication, at events held at the United Nations in New York, London, Johannesburg, Milan and Nairobi following official confirmation from Guinness World Records:



The MCW report **Reclaiming Time** highlights the pressures workers in the UK face to work longer and longer hours, not surprisingly "Low levels of pay and household income are main factors promoting the working of official overtime. Inadequate earnings explained why workers took on paid overtime...." Page 37.

As a movement of Christian workers, we live our faith by being involved in the transformation of the world, by being in touch with the victims of an unjust, affluent and powerful globalisation.

# Lay Leadership Conference

By Jo Dearlove

This two day training conference at Ushaw College, Durham, focusing on lay leadership took place at the invitation of Bishop Kevin Dunn from Hexham & Newcastle Diocese.



Mary Foy, Chair of the MCW's NEC and the Bishop set the scene for the 16 lay representatives from his diocese attending the conference. Mary spoke of the See, Judge & Act method which was the core of the programme so that the participants were not told about it but rather experienced it in practice. The Bishop demonstrating his commitment to lay leadership training announced the launch of a lay leadership training fund within his diocese. He also emphasised his belief in the view that lay leadership meant people being rooted in the world and in the community: A perfect opening for the first session 'Knowing Your Community' and the group work which followed. What became apparent was the variety of different communities with which we were either involved or simply passed by. However, any engagement as a leader demanded the raising of our awareness of what the world was like for all those around us.

Famous 'Leaders of Our Time' were presented as prompts to think what elements, style and manner of leadership was compatible with our

values. Two concrete examples of unknown leaders were given, from England and South America, highlighting their approach and actions of knowing the issues, raising awareness and acting with and through others to make a difference. These leaders influenced ordinary people to be inclusive to act together for necessary change. Workshops enabled thoughtful sharing on these aspects.

Called as leaders by virtue of our Baptism the inspiration for the where and the how was cemented through the presentation 'Jesus as a Leader & the Leaders He Called'. Jesus' leadership was shown to have been grounded within the socio-economic and political issues of his day. His use of the everyday experience, concerns and language through parables and challenges of how life should be lived was inspirationally illustrated.



The 'Community & Leadership' booklet was distributed along with a fuller explanation of the See, Judge & Act method. Having identified their own priorities and training needs the participants offered up the fruits of their labour in a memorable Eucharistic Celebration.

## ***Merci and Bon Voyage***

After over 12 years as Editor of the MCW, John Meagher has decided it is time for him to pass the baton on. This has nothing whatever to do with the fact that he and Liz are moving to live and work in the South of France. The National Committee of the MCW wishes them every success in their new life and thanks them both for all their hard work given selflessly to the MCW. Bonne chance.

*The views expressed by contributors to MCW Review do not necessarily represent the views of the MCW*

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